

Perrin, W.F.; Dolar, M.L.L.; Robineau, D. 1999. Spinner dolphins (*Stenella longirostris*) of the western Pacific and Southeast Asia: Pelagic and shallow-water forms. *Marine Mammal Science* vol. 15, no. 4, pp. 1029-1053.

**Abstract:**

A dwarf form of the spinner dolphin has been reported from the Gulf of Thailand, while more typical large spinner dolphins have been described from Japanese waters and other localities in the western Pacific. These reports have been based on very few specimens. Our purpose in this study was to determine the affinities of spinner dolphins throughout the region based on larger samples and to review their taxonomic status, with an hypothesis of two widespread ecotypic forms, or subspecies. We examined 213 osteological specimens, from a tuna gillnet fishery in the Philippines, from the former Taiwanese shark gillnet fishery in the Timor and Arafura Seas off northern Australia, from the Gulf of Thailand, from other areas in the western Pacific and Southeast Asia, from the eastern Indian Ocean, and from the Central and South Pacific. Results show that spinner dolphins from the deep inner waters of the Philippines conform to the large pelagic type of spinner dolphin that inhabits the Central and South Pacific, the western Pacific and the eastern Indian Ocean. The skull is similar in size and shape to the holotype specimen of *S. longirostris* (from unknown locality). This form feeds primarily on small mesopelagic fishes and squids. Spinner dolphins from the shallow waters of inner Southeast Asia represented in the sample, including the Gulf of Thailand, Timor Sea and Arafura Sea, are smaller in body and skull size, have fewer teeth and vertebrae, and feed mainly on benthic and coral reef fishes and invertebrates. We hypothesize that this form also inhabits the Java Sea and other shallow waters throughout inner Indonesia and Malaysia. We redescribe a subspecies corresponding to the small form and based on *Delphinus roseiventris* Wagner 1846 from the Arafura Sea, designating a neotype and paraneotype specimens.